



State Senator

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VALDE GARCIA

Serving the 22nd District

Shiawassee-Livingston-southern Ingham counties

COFFEE BREAK NEWS

Senate passes cell-phone privacy bill

Michigan residents would have greater protection in keeping their mobile-phone number private under legislation passed by the Senate. The bill now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Senate Bill 127 would require that mobile-phone service providers receive explicit written consent from their subscribers before listing them in a nationwide directory. Major mobile-phone service providers have discussed creating a directory of the more than 180 million cell-phone users.

Consumers have complained about creating such a directory because they don't want their numbers published and possibly used for telemarketing. Unknowingly, some mobile-phone users have consented to have their numbers included in a directory because their contracts include fine print that would include their number.

Senator Garcia introduces legislation to allow increased probation period for child abusers

Probation for individuals convicted of a child-abuse misdemeanor could increase to a maximum of five years under legislation unveiled by Senator Garcia. Under current law, a district judge may sentence a convicted child abuser who has committed third- or fourth-degree child abuse to a maximum of two years probation, which is well under the allowed five-year maximum probation placed on individuals convicted of misdemeanor sex offenses and stalking.

Third-degree child abuse occurs when a person knowingly or intentionally causes physical harm to a child. Fourth-degree child abuse occurs when a person's omission of information or reckless act causes physical harm to a child.

Meaningful water protection measures have become law

Groundbreaking, comprehensive legislation to protect Michigan's waters was signed into law last week. The state's water supply will be protected now and for succeeding generations.

The law will conserve and safeguard the Great Lakes and the state's other water resources. Senate Bills 850-852, 854 and 857 create new standards for water withdrawals and permitting programs for water users to help avoid adverse impacts on the environment.

The package will strengthen the current prohibition against water diversion by requiring legislative oversight; put in place a system to manage significant new water withdrawals that have the potential to impact our water and water-dependent natural resources; implement an interim standard that will provide protections for key designated trout streams by defining critical zones around the streams; develop an easy-to-use model to replace the interim standard that will allow a user to click on a map and determine if water use will cause an adverse impact; establish a permitting program for water bottling operations; authorize the creation of groups of water users to work with the DEQ in crafting water plans that resolve water use problems before adverse impacts occur; and require businesses that use our water to propose water use conservation measures.